



Grains of truth about PANCAKES

Definition

The pancake is a thin flat cake made from batter and fried on a griddle or in a skillet. The batter usually consists of eggs, flour, milk or water and oil or melted butter. The recipe for the batter often varies to include such ingredients as buttermilk, sugar and sourdough starter. Whether they are called pancakes, griddlecakes, flapjacks, wheatcakes, or flannel cakes, they are among our most popular food choices. Pancakes, in one form or another, are found in almost every culture.

History

The oldest form of bread is believed to have been a type of unleavened pancake. It has survived throughout history as a distinct food. In earlier times, English pancakes were sometimes moistened with ale, which had a leavening effect when the pancake was fried. Today, yeast, baking powder or soda are sometimes added to lighten the cake.

Availability

Pancakes are found on most restaurant breakfast menus across the United States and in most all-purpose cookbooks. There are numerous convenience commercial mixes available in grocery stores that require only the addition of liquid and eggs. They can also be found fully cooked and ready for the microwave in the frozen section of the grocery store.

“Silver-dollar” sized pancakes are often popular in restaurants, but pancakes can be big enough to cover an entire plate. Pancakes are traditionally eaten with butter and syrup or powdered sugar. They can also be spread with sugar, fruit mixture or peanut butter--rolled and eaten by hand.



Storage

Pancakes should be served immediately after cooking. It is not recommended that pancakes be reheated as they can become tough. However, if necessary, they can be frozen and reheated in the microwave on low heat or you can pop them into your toaster.

Nutritional value

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends eating 5 to 10 ounces of grain foods daily (depending on age, gender and activity level), with half of them coming from whole grains. Pancakes are a part of that food group, which can be enriched or whole grain. Balance toppings wisely with your other food choices throughout the day. Sugar, jams, jellies, fruits and fruit purees have only a four calories per gram; butter and margarine have nine. One 1-ounce pancake (about the size of a slice of bread, made from enriched flour) from a typical home recipe provides approximately: 60 calories, 2 g protein, 9 g carbohydrates, 2 g fat, 16 mg cholesterol, 0 g fiber, 0 mg iron and 115 mg sodium.

Preparation

- ◆ Do not over-mix the batter, stir just until blended
 - ◆ Heat a heavy griddle or skillet and grease it lightly (a non-stick cooking spray works fine.) If the batter contains a high fat content (at least 2 tablespoons of fat per cup of liquid) the griddle will not need to be greased
 - ◆ For a thicker pancake, add 1 tablespoon of flour to the mixture
 - ◆ For thinner pancakes, add a little water at a time to the mixture, until desired consistency is achieved
 - ◆ Test the temperature of the griddle by dropping a few drops of water on it. If the water bounces and sputters, the griddle is ready
 - ◆ To make a round pancake, pour the batter from the tip of the spoon
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- ◆ Bake until bubbles appear on the surface and start to burst. If the underside is golden brown, turn the pancake over. Two or three minutes per side is usually sufficient

Variations

BLINI: A small pancake of Russia and Poland made of both wheat and buckwheat flour, yeast, butter, eggs and milk. Blini is often spread with caviar or slices of smoked salmon, stacked one on top of another and served with sour cream.

BLINTZ: The traditional pancake of Jewish cuisine with an eastern European origin. It is fried very thin and rolled with cheese, cream cheese or fruits, such as blueberries or apples, and served with sour cream.

CANNELLONI: An Italian hors d'oeuvre or entrée. It may be made with noodle dough or pancake batter. The pancake is spread with a cheese or finely chopped, well-seasoned meat mixture. It is then rolled and covered with a cheese sauce and baked.

CREPE: A French pancake. Crepes are made of a flour and egg batter and are very thin and light. They are often spread with jam, fruit, whipped cream or rolled in a sweet sauce and served as a dessert. The best known of these, Crepes Suzette, is doused with liqueur and set afire. Crepes may be filled with meat, poultry or cheese and served as an entrée.

EIERKUCKAS: A rich pancake from the Alsace Lorraine region of northeastern France. The batter is mixed with red currant jelly and cream.

FLENSJES: A very thick Dutch pancake made of egg batter and served as dessert with sugar, ginger jam, or marmalade.

FLAESKPANNKAKA: A pork or bacon pancake from Sweden. The batter is cooked until nearly set, then the meat is laid on top and the cooking then completed.

PALASCINTA: This Hungarian pancake may be served for dessert or a main course, depending on the filling. It can be spread with minced ham and mushrooms, grated cheese and sour cream or topped with preserves and/or sour cream.

PANNEKOEKE: The basic Dutch pancake. It might be small, filled with custard and served as dessert. Or, it might be large with bacon cooked into it and served with molasses as an entrée.

PANNKUCHEN: A crepe-like German pancake, it is often served with a mixture of currants, candied peel, grated lemon peel and sour cream.

PLATTER of PANNKAKA: A Swedish pancake traditionally served with syrup, jam or spiced cranberries.

PO-PING: In Chinese cuisine, the thin mandarin pancake used in such dishes as Peking duck and moo shu pork.

Recipe

LIGHT-AS-A-FEATHER WHOLE WHEAT PANCAKES

- 1 1/3 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 egg
- 1 1/3 cups buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon oil

In a medium bowl, stir or sift dry ingredients together. Beat egg, buttermilk, brown sugar and oil together. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Batter should be slightly lumpy.

Pour 1/4 cup batter for each cake onto a well-seasoned hot griddle. Turn when bubbles appear on surface. Turn only once. Makes 12, 4-inch pancakes.

Nutrient Analysis: Each pancake provides approximately: 78 calories, 3 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 2 g fat (0 g saturated), 19 mg cholesterol, 9 mcg folate, 1 mg iron, 51 mg calcium, 104 mg potassium and 178 mg sodium.

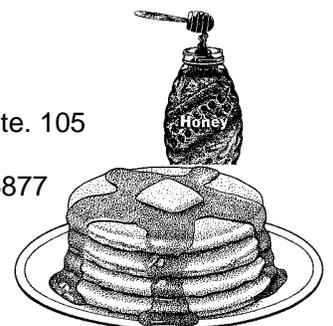
ALTERNATIVES:

- ◆ Omit soda, use 2 teaspoons baking powder and 1 1/3 cups regular or skim milk.
- ◆ Add 1/2 cup fresh or frozen blueberries.
- ◆ Serve hot, chunky, spiced applesauce or thick fruit sauce over cakes instead of syrup for extra nutrition and fiber.

RECIPE COURTESY OF KANSAS WHEAT COMMISSION

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